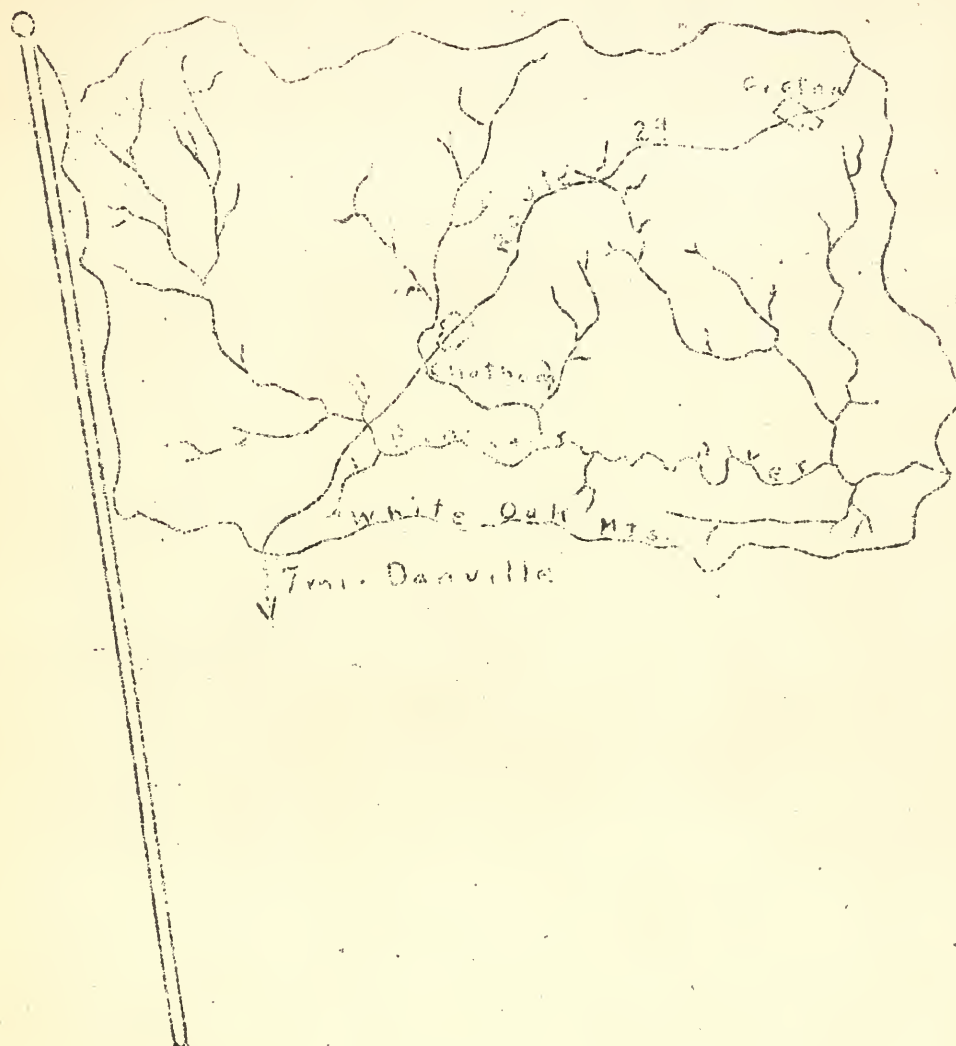


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Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



AUG 1, 1934



# Banister River Banner

UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

THE SOIL EROSION SERVICE

CHATHAM, VA.

Ev. 1, no. 1

## ANNOUNCEMENT

We present to the farm owners in the Banister River drainage area the first edition of the Banister River Banner. This publication will be mailed to you on the first of each month and will contain news and briefs of vital importance. It will show all progress, and in brief, the program for carrying out the work. Any constructive criticisms or contributions will be highly appreciated.

## UNCLE SAM COMBATS SOIL EROSION

The United States Government has recognized the need for Soil Erosion Control and has established here in Chatham, located in Pittsylvania County, an organization to cooperate with farm owners in fighting this menace to the land. The area of this project is 146,000 acres or 228 sq. mi. You are included in this project if your farm finally drains into the Banister River above Markham's bridge. Generally speaking the area is as follows: Beginning at Callands the boundary proceeds along the pike toward Danville to Pleasant Gap. It then follows the White Oak Mountain to a point between Spring Garden and Shockoe. Here it includes Shockoe Creek and follows the Shockoe-Riceville road, or along the ridge south of Shockoe Creek, until it touches Banister River. It then follows the ridge between George's Creek and Stinking Creek, and includes Chalk Level, Gretna, Piney Fork and Climax. From Climax the boundary proceeds west by Greenpond and thence back to Callands. You should take advantage of this splendid opportunity, not only as a means to improve your property, but as a cooperator in this immense task which the government has undertaken. Remember, this is not a local project, there are 25 such control areas scattered over the United States and if we can help Uncle Sam in his efforts we are showing a 100% American spirit.

## PLANS OF THE AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT

It is a well known fact that one of the best ways to control soil erosion is to follow a cropping system that keeps a sod or close growing crop on our fields as much of the time as is possible. Such a system will not only prevent soil erosion, but will improve the soil and provide adequate crops for any farm.

The Agronomy program of the Soil Erosion Service at Chatham is based on this plan, and may be divided into the following groups:

- (1) A one, two or three year rotation suited to tobacco will be suggested for all tobacco land.
- (2) On all other tillable land a three year rotation of corn, small grain, grass and clover will be recommended.
- (3) Strip rotation will be recommended on fields that must be cultivated if the size of the field permits. This means that the field will be divided by terraces and the complete rotation will be established. When this system is used all of the field will not be fallowed for a clean cultivated crop at any one time.

These figures show that the process of sheet erosion or removal of top soil by water washing has been active. The fact that over 15 per cent of the open fields surveyed have lost practically all their top soil and 59 per cent have lost about one-half of the top soil is undeniable evidence that sheet erosion is affecting the fields in this vicinity.

The table also shows that about 11 per cent of the fields have occasional shallow gullies (1 to 3 per acre) and that almost 1 per cent of the fields have more than 3 shallow gullies per acre. On the 45 farms survey a total of 125 deep gullies that need dams and plantings were found.

An "A" slope as used in the table means from 0 to 3 per cent slope, "B" is 3 to 7 per cent, "C" is 7 to 12 per cent, and "D" is more than 12 per cent slope.

#### SOIL EROSION DIVISION

To date the Soil Erosion Division has worked out cooperative agreements on 12 farms totaling 1750 acres of which 619 acres are in cultivation.

So far there have been no failures to work out a farm plan which is agreeable to the landowner, as the farmers are not only willing, but anxious to cooperate in the work of the Soil Erosion Service.

We are not going to any farmer who has not invited us. The invitations are taken in the order in which they are received. If you have not sent one in do so now. We will get to your farm just as quickly as possible, so do not call or write for special favors as we must work by our rule of first come, first served.

This division expects to survey approximately 150 farms per month as soon as we get our full staff together and working. Your invitation sent in today should get action during the early part of September. If you delay it will be much later.

Remember this -

You help to work out the plans for your farm.

The work will be done when you are not busy with your crops.

You furnish only what labor, teams and materials (brush, posts, straw, etc.) you have on the farm.

You repay our out-lay of time, material and supplies by cooperating to the extent of keeping improvements put on your farm in working condition for a period of five years.

Terraces hold soil and moisture and increase land values.

Check dams stop gullies from taking your fields.

Pastures increase production and cut down feed costs.



\*4\*

# EROSION MAPPED THROUGH JUNE 30, 1934

NO. OF Farms	ACREAGE				
	Total	Forest	All open Fields cul- tivated plus pasture fields	Cultivated Fields	Pastures
45	6,780	2,649	4,121	3,549	572
		Per Cent of Total Acreage			
		39%	61%	47.1%	13.9%

EROSION IN OPEN FIELDS ACRES						
#1	#2	#3	#4	Occas. Gullies	Severe Gullying	Approx. No. deep gullies.
				7	8	
41	990	2,377	617	471	38	125
		Per Cent in Relation to Open Fields				
1%	24.6%	59%	15.4%	11.4%	0.9%	

## Approximate Per Cent of A, B, C, D Slope found in Open Fields

A	B	C	D
6.1%	44.7%	32.5%	16.6%

No. 1 erosion means that no sheet erosion or washing of the top soil has taken place. The table shows that only 1 per cent of the land in this Banister area has not been affected by erosion.

No. 2 erosion means that less than 25 per cent of the top soil has been removed by erosion. We see from the table that about 25 per cent or one-fourth of our open fields still have a good cover of top soil.

No. 3 erosion means that from 25 to 75 per cent of the top soil has been removed. The table shows that 2,377 acres or 59 per cent of the 6780 acres covered by the survey have about one-half of the top soil removed.

No. 4 erosion means that practically all of the sandy top soil has been removed and the red subsoil is exposed. More than 15 per cent of the area covered by the survey is in this condition.

EROSION MAPPED THROUGH JUNE 30, 1934

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	Total	Forest	All open	Cultivated	Pastures	
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			tivated plus			
			pasture fields			
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Check dams stop gullies from taking your fields.

Pastures increase production and cut down feed costs.



\*6\*

Fence around pasture saves time and loss of cash and feed crops.

Forest trees grow into money.

The whole plan working together will make your farm a better place to live.

Send the enclosed invitation today.

#### SES - ECW - CAMP #1 NEWS

The CCC Camp assigned to the Soil Erosion Service, with an enrolled strength of 207 men, is located approximately 6 miles west of Chatham on the Grubb Farm off of Route 57.

The work of major importance which is contemplated and to be done by the Camp boys may be divided into four main divisions, namely (1) Gully Control Work, (2) Stream Channel work, (3) Construction of Terrace Outlets and (4) Lime Production.

Splendid progress is being made on the gully control and stream channel project at the present time.

Now, that the terracing equipment is on the job it is likely that several crews will be assigned to the construction of terrace outlets within the next few days.

The production of 12 thousand tons of lime, which is to be used on many farms in the area, will start as soon as authorization is received.

**STREAM CHANNEL WORK**--The primary object of this stream work is to protect as far as possible the very fertile and productive lowlands from floodwaters by increasing the run off flow of Banister River and its many tributaries. This can be accomplished to some extent by straightening out the stream channels where feasible and the removal of all serious obstructions. It has been estimated that crooked channel often time retard the stream flow 30 to 60 per cent. Approximately 50 miles of stream work is contemplated in the area.

From May 18 to August 1st, inclusive, 13 miles of the Banister River and Bearskin Creek channels and banks have been practically cleaned of all obstructions, such as overhanging trees, sunken logs, stumps, brush, etc. The obstructions which are too large or heavy to be removed economically by labor will be removed at a later date by means of explosives and a gasoline driven hoist.

**GULLY CONTROL WORK**- Since June 21st two crews of enrollees have been constantly engaged in the construction of low check dams in the gullies on the farms of D. A. Powell, R. D. Whitehead, G. W. Clark, A. J. Fuller, and B. F. Williams. The types of dams which are being constructed are wire, log, rock, and brush, ranging from 12 inches to 30 inches in height.

#### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURES

Mr. G. L. Fuller, Soil Erosion Specialist from the Washington

office, arrived July 21, and made an inspection of soils in our area with the soil staff.

Our Chief Soils expert, Mr. F. F. Nickels, is making a soil survey of every county in the State of Virginia and the past two week-ends have found him at Blacksburg, Virginia, and College Park, Maryland, securing the latest information from the people there which will help him in his work.

Mr. J. H. Lillard, Jr., another member of the Soils Staff has been transferred from the local office to Spencer, West Virginia. We are sorry to see him leave but feel confident that he will like his new location. Best wishes to you, Lillard.

Mr. Wm. A. F. Stephenson, Chief of Operations of the Soil Erosion Service, was a recent visitor to the S. E. S. Camp.

We also hear that J. G. Lindley, Supervising Eng., C.C.C. Camps, and Prof. Charles E. Seitz, Technical Advisor, made visits to the Soil Erosion Camp.

Dr. T. S. Buie, Regional Director, Tyger River Area, and Consulting Regional Director, Banister River Project, is at present in Spartanburg, S.C., on business, but is expected to return around the first of August.

S. L. Jeffords, Chief Agronomist and Assistant Regional Director, Tyger River Branch, South Carolina, also Acting Regional Director, Banister River Area, made a flying trip to the Spartanburg office the week-end of July 29.

Members of the staff are to confer with State officials in Richmond Thursday, August 2, relative to arrangements concerning the operation of a lime plant which will supply lime for the farms of those cooperating with the Soil Erosion Service.

#### MEMBERS OF THE BANISTER RIVER S. E. STAFF

##### EXECUTIVE

Mr. S. L. Jeffords, Acting Regional Director  
Dr. T. S. Buie, Consulting Regional Director  
Mr. J. P. Crawford, Chief Clerk  
Mr. B. D. Bennett, Asst. Chief Clerk  
Mr. A. B. Motley, Warehouseman

##### FIELD CROPS

Mr. T. L. Copley, Chief Agronomist

##### FORESTRY

Mr. J. B. Pike, Jr., Chief Forester  
Mr. O. W. Price, Asst. Forester

##### SOILS

Mr. F. F. Nickels, Acting Chief  
Dr. A. J. Baur, Soils Expert

##### AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING

Mr. J. K. Alvis, Acting Chief Engineer  
Mr. W. G. Nunn, Asst. Engineer  
Mr. T. H. Garrett, Asst. Engineer  
Mr. E. H. Howard, Chief Draftsman

##### FARM MANAGEMENT

Mr. T. C. Maurer, Acting Chief Soil Erosion

##### C.C.C. CAMP

B. F. Dyer, Superintendent  
Benj. Renn, Capt. U.S. Army Commander